



1                   26.     (Unchanged) A method for suturing a puncture of a blood vessel through  
2 a tissue tract of a patient body, the vessel having a vessel wall, the method comprising:  
3                   inserting a distal end of the probe through the puncture and into the blood  
4 vessel;  
5                   advancing a first end of the suture from the probe within the tissue tract,  
6 through the vessel wall, and into the vessel;  
7                   withdrawing the first end of the suture from the vessel, through the vessel wall  
8 and through a bight of the suture to form a loop of suture across the puncture; and  
9                   tensioning the first end of the suture and a second end of the suture adjacent the  
10 bight to form a knot affixing the loop of suture across the puncture

1                   27.     (Unchanged) The method of claim 26, further comprising releasably  
2 attaching the bight of suture to a probe before the inserting step, wherein the tensioning step  
3 detaches the bight from the probe

28-39.           PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

40.              CANCELED.

41.              PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

42-43.           CANCELED.

44-47.           PREVIOUSLY CANCELED.

Please add the new claims 48-84 as follows .

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1                   -- 48.   (New) A method of closing an aperture in a wall of a vessel, the method  
2 comprising:  
3                   causing a device to place at least one suture element through a vessel wall  
4 adjacent an aperture in the vessel wall, such that opposed portions of the suture element extend  
5 from the vessel wall;  
6                   causing the device to form a loose knot formation between the opposed portions  
7 of the at least one suture element after the suture element has been placed; and

8 tightening the loose knot formation thereby at least partially to close the  
9 aperture in the vessel wall.

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1 49. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein causing the device to place the  
2 at least one suture element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture in the vessel wall  
3 comprises causing the device to place the at least one suture element such that the suture  
4 element extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and  
5 through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture.

1 50. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein one of the opposed portions of  
2 the suture element defines a loop formation, causing the device to form a loose knot formation  
3 between the opposed portions of the suture element comprising causing the device to pass the  
4 other of the opposed portions of the suture element through the loop formation.

1 51. (New) The method of claim 50, wherein the loop formation is held on  
2 the device releasably, causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions through the  
3 loop formation comprising causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions through  
4 the loop formation while the loop formation is held on the device.

1 52. (New) The method of claim 51, wherein tightening the loose knot  
2 formation comprises pulling the opposed portions of the suture element away from each other  
3 after the other of the opposed portions has been passed through the loop formation.

1 53. (New) The method of claim 52, which comprises causing the loose knot  
2 formation to travel toward the aperture in the vessel wall and the loose knot formation to  
3 tighten when at the aperture in response to pulling the opposed portions away from each other.

1 54. (New) The method of claim 52, which comprises causing the loop  
2 formation to be released from the device in response to pulling the opposed portions away  
3 from each other.

1 55. (New) The method of claim 48, wherein causing the device to place at  
2 least one suture element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture in the vessel wall  
3 comprises causing the device to place at least two suture elements through the vessel wall

4 adjacent the aperture such that opposed portions of each suture element extends from the vessel  
5 wall.

1 56. (New) The method of claim 55, wherein causing the device to place at  
2 least two suture elements through the vessel wall comprises causing the device to place each  
3 suture element through the vessel wall such that each suture element extends through the vessel  
4 wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed  
5 side of the aperture.

1 57. (New) The method of claim 56, wherein causing the device to form a  
2 loose knot formation between the opposed portions of the at least one suture element comprises  
3 causing the device to form a loose knot formation between the opposed portions of each suture  
4 element.

1 58. (New) The method of claim 57, wherein one of the opposed portions of  
2 each suture element defines a loop formation, causing the device to form a loose knot  
3 formation between the opposed portions of each suture element comprising causing the device  
4 to pass the other of the opposed portions of each suture element through the loop formations.

1 59. (New) The method of claim 58, wherein the loop formations are held on  
2 the device releasably, causing the device to pass the other of the opposed portions of each  
3 suture element through the loop formations comprising causing the device to pass the other of  
4 the opposed portions through the loop formations while the loop formations are held on the  
5 device.

1 60. (New) The method of claim 59, which comprises tightening each loose  
2 knot formation thereby to close the aperture in the vessel wall.

1 61. (New) The method of claim 60, wherein tightening the loose knot  
2 formations comprises pulling the opposed portions of each suture element away from each  
3 other after the other of the opposed portions have been passed through the loop formations.

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1           62.   (New) The method of claim 61, which comprises causing the loose knot  
2   formations to travel toward the aperture and the loose knot formations to tighten when at the  
3   aperture in response to pulling the opposed portions away from one another.

1           63.   (New) The method of claim 61, which comprises causing the loop  
2   formations to be released from the device in response to pulling the opposed portions away from  
3   each other.

1           64.   (New) The method as claimed in claim 48 or claim 55, wherein causing  
2   the device to place the or each suture element through the vessel wall comprises causing the  
3   device to pass an end of the or each suture element through the vessel wall on one side of the  
4   aperture from a position outside the vessel, causing the device to pass the or each end across the  
5   aperture inside the vessel, and causing the device to pass the or each end through the vessel wall  
6   at the opposed side of the aperture such that the or each suture element extends through the  
7   vessel wall on the one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on the  
8   opposed side of the aperture.

1           65.   (New) The method of claim 64, wherein causing the device to place the or  
2   each suture element through the vessel wall comprises passing an end portion of the device  
3   through the aperture in the vessel wall.  
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1           66.   (New) The method of claim 65, wherein causing the device to place the or  
2   each suture element through the vessel wall comprises deploying an elongate foot of the device  
3   within the vessel, after the end portion of the device has been passed through the aperture, so that  
4   the foot extends across the aperture.

1           67.   (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the device comprises at least one  
2   connection element releasably held on the foot, the or each connection element being arranged to  
3   extend across the aperture when the foot is deployed, causing the device to place the or each  
4   suture element through the vessel wall comprising causing the device to engage the end of the or  
5   each suture element with an end of the or each connection element after the end of the or each  
6   suture element has been passed through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture.

68. (New) The method of claim 67, wherein causing the device to place the or each suture element through the vessel wall further comprises causing the device to pull an opposed end of the or each connection element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture after the end of the or each suture element has been engaged with the end of the or each connection element, thereby to cause the device to pass the end of the or each suture element through the vessel wall at the opposed side of the aperture.

69. (New) A device for closing an aperture in a wall of a vessel, the device comprising:  
a body;  
at least one suture element held on the body; and  
means for passing the suture element through the vessel wall adjacent an aperture in the vessel wall, such that opposed portions of the suture element extend from the vessel wall and the suture element is positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions thereof after the suture element has been passed through the vessel wall.

70. (New) The device of claim 69, wherein the means for passing the suture element through the vessel wall adjacent the aperture is arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel wall such that the suture element extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture.

71. (New) The device of claim 70, which comprises at least two suture elements held on the body and means for passing each suture element through the vessel wall such that each suture element extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture and each suture element is positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions thereof after the suture elements have been passed through the vessel wall.

72. (New) A device for closing an aperture in a vessel wall, the device comprising:  
a body;

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4 at least one suture element held on the body; and  
5 at least one needle on the body, the needle being operatively associated with the  
6 suture element and arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel wall such that  
7 opposed portions of the suture element extend from the vessel wall and the suture element is  
8 positioned to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions thereof after the suture  
9 element has been passed through the vessel wall.

1 73. (New) The device of claim 72, wherein the at least one needle is  
2 arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel wall such that the suture element  
3 extends through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture, across the aperture, and through the  
4 vessel wall on an opposed side of the aperture and the suture element is held on the body in a  
5 position to form a loose knot formation between opposed portions of the suture element after  
6 the suture element has been passed through the vessel wall.

1 74. (New) The device of claim 73, wherein a portion of the suture element is  
2 held on the body to define a loop formation, the needle being arranged to pass an opposed  
3 portion of the suture element through the loop formation after the suture element has been  
4 passed through the vessel wall, thereby to position the suture element to form a loose knot  
5 formation between the opposed portions thereof.

1 75. (New) The device of claim 74, which comprises at least two needles  
2 operatively associated with the suture element, the one needle being arranged to pass the suture  
3 element through the vessel wall on one side of the aperture and the other needle being arranged  
4 to pass the suture element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture.

1 76. (New) The device of claim 75, wherein the one needle is arranged to  
2 pass the suture element through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture from a position  
3 outside the vessel and the other needle is arranged to pass the suture element through the vessel  
4 wall on the opposed side of the aperture from a position inside the vessel.

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1           77.   (New) The device of claim 76, wherein the other needle is arranged to  
2 pass through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture and then to draw the suture  
3 element from inside the vessel through the vessel wall and through the loop formation.

1           78.   (New) The device of claim 77, which further comprises at least one  
2 connection element on the body, the connection element being arranged to extend across the  
3 aperture.

1           79.   (New) The device of claim 78, wherein the connection element is in the  
2 form of a relatively short length of suture.

1           80.   (New) The device of claim 78, wherein the connection element is arranged  
2 to cooperate with the first and second needles such that when the one needle passes the suture  
3 element through the vessel wall on the one side of the aperture, an end of the suture element  
4 engages with an end of the connection element, and when the other needle passes through the  
5 vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture, the other needle engages an opposed end of the  
6 connection element.

1           81.   (New) The device of claim 80, wherein the suture element is releasably  
2 engaged on the one needle so that when the one needle has passed the suture element through the  
3 vessel wall on the one side of the aperture and the end of the suture element has engaged with the  
4 end of the connection element and the other needle has been passed through the vessel wall on  
5 the opposed side of the aperture and has engaged the opposed end of the connection element, the  
6 suture element can be passed through the vessel wall in response to the other needle drawing the  
7 connection element through the vessel wall on the opposed side of the aperture.

1           82.   (New) The device of claim 81, wherein the body comprises a shaft portion  
2 arranged to be passed through the aperture in the vessel wall.

1           83.   (New) The device of claim 82, which comprises an elongate foot  
2 formation on the shaft portion, the foot formation being selectively displaceable between a low

3 profile condition, in which the foot is generally aligned with the shaft, and a deployed  
4 condition, in which the foot extends generally laterally relative to the shaft.

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1 84. (New) The device of claim 83, wherein the connection element is  
2 mounted on the foot formation such that the connection element extends across the aperture  
3 when the shaft portion has been passed through the aperture and the foot formation has been  
4 displaced into its deployed condition.--

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.



Respectfully submitted,

  
C. James Wheeler

Granted Limited Recognition under 37 CFR §10.9(b)  
as set out in the attached authorization

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